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Value added agriculture program to expand under new law

LANSING – Legislation that will help more people in the agriculture industry benefit from money in the 21st Century Jobs Fund was signed today by the governor, said Sen. Michelle McManus.

Senate Bill 1168, sponsored by McManus, offers a grant and low-interest loan program that would leverage private sector funding to accelerate the development and expansion of value added agriculture.

“Agriculture is Michigan’s second largest industry and is a critical part of our state’s economy,” said McManus, R-Lake Leelanau. “This new act will help more members of the agricultural community benefit from the 21st Century Jobs Fund money. It will assist those who are looking to expand their business through tourism or new products.”

Examples of ways a business can use the grants include becoming an agri-tourism destination, marketing organic products or producing and selling other specialty products.

Value added agriculture is a process of increasing the economic value and consumer appeal of an agricultural commodity. It is an alternative production and marketing strategy where a farmer is not only involved in production of a raw commodity but also takes part in processing, and distribution of the product. Examples of value added agriculture includes food processing, drying, canning, juicing, handcrafting, unique packaging, labeling and marketing.

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